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What is warfare prayer?

Question: "What is warfare prayer?"

Answer: Warfare prayer is a prayer technique popular with [Charismatic](#) Christian denominations. It focuses on using prayer as a weapon to do battle with the spiritual forces of evil, especially in regard to one's daily life, habits, and struggles. Almost always, warfare prayer is just what it sounds like: prayers prayed for the purpose of waging war against an unseen, spiritual enemy who is bent on making us unhappy by thwarting our dreams and desires.

There is no doubt that [spiritual warfare](#) is real. Christians have an enemy in Satan and his demons ([Ephesians 6:12](#)). Prayer is commanded in the context of putting on the armor of God ([Ephesians 6:18](#)). Some things recommended by warfare prayer adherents are useful. That said, some warfare prayer techniques are unbiblical, and believers should take great care not to be led astray by man's opinion about how to pray versus God's command. Promoters of warfare prayer often recommend praying prayers written by others—and to pray them repeatedly.

In the [Sermon on the Mount](#), Jesus gave two general guidelines on prayer: pray secretly instead of to be seen by other people and don't repeat empty phrases ([Matthew 6:5-8](#)). Then, He taught His disciples to pray like this: "Our Father in

heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one” ([Matthew 6:9-13](#)). Finally, Jesus stressed the importance of forgiveness, saying that those who are forgiving will be forgiven ([Matthew 6:14-15](#)).

Warfare prayer commonly encourages a “take control” attitude, where prayer warriors are told to be bold, decisive, and faithful in prayer. There is nothing wrong with praying boldly and faithfully, as long as we remember who is in charge. It’s not us. Common “warfare prayers” include many “I” statements such as “I declare,” “I decree,” “I bind,” “I overrule,” “I smash,” “I rebuke,” etc. The pray-er is the acting agent, and there is a danger of praying “My will be done” rather than “Thy will be done.”

Some warfare prayers recommend speaking to Satan in direct address. This is not biblical at all. Our prayers are to be directed to God alone. The Bible never tells us to [rebuke Satan](#) or to speak to him or his demons in any way. The rebuking of Satan is done by the Lord, not us. “Even the archangel Michael . . . did not himself dare to condemn [Satan] for slander but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’” ([Jude 1:9](#)). The biblical instruction is to submit to God and resist the devil ([James 4:7](#)), not to demand things of Satan.

Probably the clearest danger in most “warfare prayer” is the focus on material things. Proponents of warfare prayer are often promoters of “[name it, claim it](#)” theology. Many warfare prayers include a “release” of wealth, a “binding” of sickness, or a “decree” of restoration and blessing. Those with enough faith will decree a “sevenfold” blessing upon themselves. They may “[plead the blood](#)” or “cover themselves” with the blood of Christ, things the Bible never tells us to plead or do. The New Testament is clear that God is not obligated to give us material wealth or to heal our sickness, no matter how much we demand or decree it, and no matter how much we denounce the devil and his wiles. It is not wrong to pray for blessings, but God knows what will really benefit us, and it might not be a pain-free life or piles of possessions.

When warfare prayer gurus exhort believers to “command” things to happen in their lives or to aggressively pray for a dream or desire that may or may not be God’s will, this is not faith—it is a recipe for discouragement. Praying in the midst of our spiritual warfare is necessary, but warfare prayer does not mean praying harder, praying more decisively, or assuming authority we do not have. It means praying according to Scripture, trusting in the power of God, and submitting our will to His.

Recommended Resource: [The Prayer That Turns the World Upside Down: The Lord's Prayer as a Manifesto for Revolution by R. Albert Mohler Jr.](#)

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